REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1 and 17-20 are pending in this application, with Claim 1 being independent.

Claim 1 has been amended. Applicants submit that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 1 and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,327,656 to Zabetian in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0169721 to Cooley in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0042884 to Wu. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons discussed above.

As recited in Claim 1, the present invention is directed to a data processing method that includes, *inter alia*, the feature wherein, in a case where transmitted second feature information is confirmed successfully based on previously registered first feature information, the registered first feature information is replaced by transmitted third feature information. According to this feature, it is possible to update registered feature information while at the same time preventing the first feature information from being replaced against a user's intention, i.e., replacement occurs only if second feature information is confirmed successfully.

Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of Claim 1. Zabetian discloses that a digital certification signature extracted from an electronic document is stored, and then a subject document is verified by using the stored digital certification signature. However, even assuming, *arguendo*, that the digital certification signature in Zabetian could be considered to correspond to the feature information

in the present invention, that patent does not at all disclose that an already registered digital certification signature (first feature information) is replaced bya new digital certification signature (third feature information).

Applicants submit that the other cited art fails to remedy the deficiencies of Zabetian. Cooley et al. discloses that a watermark is extracted and stored, but does not disclose that the once-stored watermark is replaced. Wu et al. discloses that perfectibility of data is checked by using hash values. However, the hash values are transmitted together with the data but are not previously registered, unlike the first feature information of the present invention recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Wu et al. does not disclose that the hash value is replaced.

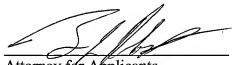
Hence, Zabetian, Cooley et al., and Wu et al., or the combination thereof, do not disclose or suggest the feature of the present invention recited in Claim 1, wherein the registered first feature information is replaced by the transmitted third feature information in a case where the transmitted second feature information is confirmed successfully. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present invention as recited in independent Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, whether that art is considered individually or in combination.

The dependent claims are believed patentable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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